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BARBARISM THE FIRST DANGER.*

Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.—JUDGES 17: 13.

A VERY unimportant chapter of biography is here preserved to us—save that if we take the subject as an exponent of his times, we shall find a serious and momentous truth illustrated in his conduct. He lives in the time of the Judges, that is, in the emigrant age of Israel. It is the time, when his nation are passing through the struggles incident to a new settlement, a time therefore of decline towards barbarism. Public security is gone. The people have run wild. Superstition has dislodged the clear sovereignty of reason. Forms are more sacred than duties, and a costly church furniture is taken as synonymous with a godly life. It is at just such times that we are to look for the union of great crimes and scrupulous acts of devotion. The villain and the saint coalesce, without difficulty, in one and the same character; and superstition, which delights in absurdities, hides the imposture from him who suffers it. Thus Micah enters on the stage of history as a thief, having stolen eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother; but before the scene closes, he becomes, at least in his own view, quite a saint; and that too, if we may judge, without any great detriment to his former character.

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Finding that his mother has invoked a solemn curse upon the thief, whoever he may be, that has stolen her money; and also, which is more frightful still, that she had actually dedicated the money, before it was stolen, to a religious use, even to make a molten image for himself, the superstitious fancy of the barbarian begins to worry his peace. To have stolen the money was nothing specially dreadful, but to have a parent's curse hanging over his head, and sacred money hid in his house—both considered to involve the certainty of some impending mischief that is fatal—is more than he has courage to support. Moved, of course, by no ingenuous and dignified spirit of repentance, but only by a drivelling superstition, he goes to his mother and chokes out his confession, saying: "The silver is with me, I took it!" And what a beautiful evidence of piety, thinks the glad mother, that her Micah was afraid to keep the sacred money! So she pours out her dear blessing upon him: "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son!" Then she takes the silver and from it has a molten image cast for her worthy and hopeful son, which he sets up in "the house of his gods," among the teraphim and other trumpery there collected. And as Micah is now growing religious, he must also have a priest. First, he consecrates his own son: but his son not being a Levite, it was difficult for so pious a man to be satisfied. Fortunately, a young Levite—a strolling mendicant probably—comes that way, and he promptly engages the youth to remain and act the *padre* for him, saying: "Dwell with me and be a *father* unto me." Having thus got up a religion, the thief is content, and his mental troubles are quieted. Becoming a Romanist before Rome is founded, he says: "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." That it would do him any good to be a better man, does not appear to have occurred to him. Religion, to him, consisted rather in a fine silver apparatus of gods, and a priest in regular succession!

Set now the picture in its frame, the man in connexion with his times, and you have in exhibition a great practical truth, which demands your earnest study. Nothing is more certain, as you may see in this example of Micah and his times, than that *emigration, or a new settlement of the social state, involves a tendency to social decline*. There must, in every such case, be a relapse towards barbarism, more or less protracted, more or less complete. Commonly, nothing but extraordinary efforts in behalf of education and religion, will suffice to prevent a fatal lapse of social order. Apart from this great truth, clearly seen as enveloped in the practical struggles of our American history, no one can understand its real import, the problem it involves, or the position at which we have now arrived. Least of all can he understand the sublime relation of home missions, and other like enterprises, to the unknown future of our great nation. He must know that we are a

people trying out the perils incident to a new settlement of the social state; he must behold religion passing out into the wilds of nature with us, to fortify law, industry, and good manners, and bear up our otherwise declining fortunes, till we become an established and fully cultivated people. Just here, hang all the struggles of our history for the two centuries now passed, and for at least another century yet to come.

We shall also discover, in pursuing our subject, in what manner we are to apprehend danger from the spread of Romanism. If you seem to struggle, in this matter of Romanism, with contrary convictions; to see reason in the alarms urged upon you so frequently, and yet feel it to be the greatest unreason to fear the prevalence here of a religion so distinctively opposite to our character and institutions; if you waver between a feeling of panic and a feeling of derision; if you are half frightened by the cry of Romanism, and half scorn it as a bugbear; you will be able to settle yourself into a sober and fixed opinion of the subject, when you perceive that we are in danger, first, of something far worse than Romanism, and through that of Romanism itself. **OUR FIRST DANGER IS BARBARISM**—Romanism next; for before we can think it a religion to have a Levite to our priest, we must bring back the times of the Judges. Let us empty ourselves of our character, let us fall into superstition, through the ignorance, wildness, and social confusion incident to a migratory habit and a rapid succession of new settlements, and Romanism will find us just where character leaves us. The real danger is the prior. Taking care of that we are safe. Sleeping over that, nothing ought to save us; for if we must have a wild race of nomads roaming on the vast western territories of our land—a race without education, law, manners, or religion—we need not trouble ourselves further on account of Romanism; for to such a people, Romanism, bad as it is, will come as a blessing.

I shall recur to this question of Romanism again. I only name it here as a preliminary, that it may assist you to apprehend the true import of my subject. Let us now proceed to the question itself, How far emigration and a continual re-settlement, as in this country, involve a tendency to moral and social disorganization? In the discussion of this question, I shall draw principally on the facts of history; I only suggest here, as a preparative and key to the facts that may be cited, a few of the reasons why such a decline is likely to appear.

First of all, the society transplanted, in a case of emigration, cannot carry its roots with it; for society is a vital creature, having roots of antiquity, which inhere in the very soil—in the spots consecrated by valor, by genius, and by religion. Transplanted to a new field, the emigrant race lose, of necessity, a considerable portion of that vital force which is the organic and conserving

power of society. All the old roots of local love and historic feeling—the joints and bands that minister nourishment—are left behind; and nothing remains to organize a living growth, but the two unimportant incidents, proximity and a common interest.

Education must, for a long time, be imperfect in degree and partial in extent. There is no literary atmosphere breathing through the forests or across the prairies. The colleges, if any they have, are only rudimental beginnings, and the youth a raw company of woodsmen. Hurried into life, at the bar, or in the pulpit, when as yet they are only half educated, their performances are crude in the matter and rough in the form. No matter how cultivated the professional men of the first age, those of the second, third, and fourth will mix up extravagance and cant in all their demonstrations, and will be acceptable to the people partly for that reason. For the immense labors and rough hardships necessary to be encountered, in the way of providing the means of living, will ordinarily create in them a rough and partially wild habit.

Then, as their tastes grow wild, their resentments will grow violent and their enjoyments coarse. The salutary restraints of society being, to a great extent, removed, they will think it no degradation to do before the woods and wild animals, what, in the presence of a cultivated social state, they would blush to perpetrate. They are likely even to look upon the indulgence of low vices and brutal pleasures, as the necessary garnish of their life of adventure.

In religion, their views will, of course, be narrow and crude, and their animosities bitter. Sometimes the very life of religion will seem about to die, as it actually would, save that some occasional outburst of over-wrought feeling or fanatical zeal kindles a temporary fire. Probably it will be found that low superstitions begin to creep in, a regarding of dreams, a faith in the presentation of Scripture texts, in apparitions and visions, perhaps also in necromancy.

Meantime, if we speak of civil order, it will probably be found that the old common law of the race is not transplanted as a vital power, but only as a recollection that refuses to live, because of the newness of the soil, and the varied circumstances which, in so many ways, render it inapplicable. It asks for loyalty where there is no demesne, offers a jury before there is a court, and sanctifies a *magna charta* where no plain of Runnymede is ever to be known. Hence the need of much new legislation, consequently much of confusion and a considerable lapse of time, before the new body of law, with its tribunals and uses, can erect its trunk and grow up into life from a native root. Meantime it is well, if the social wildness and the violent resentments of the people do not break over all the barriers of legal restraint, and dissolve the very bonds of order.

If now, besides all the causes here enumerated, the emigrants are much involved in war to maintain their possessions, or if they are gathered from many nations having different languages, laws, manners, and religions, the tendency to social decline is, of course, greatly aggravated. Indeed, where all the forms of habit, prejudice, and opinion are found to impinge upon each other, and every recollection of the past, every peculiar trait of national feeling and personal character requires to be obliterated, before it is possible for the new elements to coalesce, what can save a people, we are tempted to ask, from being precipitated downward even below society itself?

Having glanced, in this rapid manner, at the causes of decline theoretically involved in emigration (for emigration works no mischief by itself, but only as it provokes the malignant action of other causes), let us now pass to some historic illustrations. And I begin with the emigration headed by Abraham, where the facts are already familiar, so that when you are engaged in tracing their import as illustrations of my subject, your minds will be distracted by no effort of attention to conceive the facts themselves.

There was never an emigration conducted under better auspices. As in the original settlement of New England, the aim and purpose of the movement were strictly religious. The emigrants, too, were shepherds in their habit, never attached to the soil, but accustomed to movement. They came out also as a family, for Lot appears to have been only a ward of Abraham; and in the family state—which is itself a patriarchate, the simplest and most unquestionable of all governments, as it is closest to nature—they had a complete frame of social order already provided. Though trained as a nomad and manifestly ignorant of certain moral distinctions familiar to us, Abraham yet evinces, in his character, a degree of beauty and princely dignity, such as seldom can be found under the politer forms of civilization. In his heroic pursuit and slaughter of the kings to rescue Lot, in the singular dignity of his meeting with Melchisedec on his return, in the generous and conciliatory terms by which he sought to avoid the quarrel already begun between Lot's herdsmen and his own, in his hospitality at the tent door in Mamre, in his burial of Sarah, in the whole manner of his life, in short, there is a grand, massive nobility of character, which, if we cannot call it civilization or refinement, is yet only so much higher and more charming, as it is closer to nature, more original and older than the days of accomplished heartlessness and drawing-room pretence. It is the pure, virgin character of a great and primitive manhood, which, in the simple, godly life of the east country, was not yet spent.

See now what a mass of barbarism is shortly developed out of this fair beginning. The character of Lot is not strongly fortified by religious principle, and the restraints of society being now re-

moved, he soon falls into loose habits of virtue, and, in the end, brings himself and his family to a very sorry figure. Thus out of Lot springs the wild race of the Moabites, a race as degraded in character as the abominable and filthy rites of their god Baal Peor require them to be—enemies, of course, to Jehovah and the kindred stock of Israel, in all after times. The Ammonites are a branch of the same stock.

Meantime, Abraham himself is throwing off upon the world, in his son Ishmael, another stock of barbarians. Driven out with his mother, to seek his fortune as he may, among the wild tribes of idolators that infest the country, the lad, we are told, grows up in the wilderness and becomes an archer. By which it appears that he betook himself to some secret cave or fastness, in the south, and there, by the use of his bow as a hunter and robber, maintained himself, and became the father of the Bedouin race. There he trained up the young Ishmaelites, otherwise called Arabs—a name which, according to some, signifies *westerners*—a prolific, talented, and powerful race of men, whose nature it has been to this hour to live by plunder, whose hand is against every man and every man's hand against them. Thus you have another wild people, a cruel, treacherous, lying stock of thieves and idolators developed out of the emigration.

One generation later, viz. out of the family of Isaac, comes another. I speak of the persecuted Esau and the Idumeans or Edomites descended of him. These were a warlike and ferocious race, governed by dukes or great captains, and for long ages the sturdiest of all the enemies of Israel.

It is remarkable too that, when David is giving the roll, in one of his Psalms, of the great league of nations that were conspiring, at that time, against his country, he puts at the head of all precisely these three fierce and barbarous people, descended of Terah, the common ancestor both of them and of his countrymen. "For they have consulted together with one consent, they are confederate against thee, the tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagarenes." Then follow the other nations who are led by these.

Meantime, if we consider the dastardly conduct of the ten brothers of Joseph, who for jealousy sell him into slavery, and then, by a solemn lie, convince their father that he is dead—remembering also and holding in comparison Abraham's noble and magnanimous treatment of Lot—we shall see that there has certainly been a very great falling off towards barbarism, in the chosen family itself.

But we must follow them further, even into this book of Judges, where they come to make their final settlement in the land. In Egypt they had become acquainted with agriculture, with cities and the settled modes of life; though degraded, to some extent, by

their temporary subjection to slavery. But their freedom, connected with their strong legal discipline under Moses, the new sentiments and new social capacities, which had been formed under this protracted discipline of forty years, during which the old generation of slavery had become extinct, had prepared them to enter the country appointed and make a fair beginning. They took their places; for a time all was well. Still they were a people without roots, and they began, ere long, to fall into social anarchy. They served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that had overlived Joshua and had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel, and when that generation were gathered unto their fathers—so says the history “There arose another generation, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.” Now came the dark time; for in every emigration, the moral and social trial commonly falls, not on the first generation, but more frequently on the second, third, and fourth. So it was here, and it really seemed that the nation must utterly die, before it could get root. Three times it is said in the history, that “there was no king in Israel, and that every man did what was right, his own eyes.” By which we are to understand, not that royalty was discontinued, for it had not existed; but that there was no civil head, that government was utterly dissolved. It was, in truth, the paradisaic age of no government; a day when they had it, not for a theory, but for a fact. Wrongs were redressed by uprisings of popular impatience, by assassination or private revenge. In one case of outrage, which may be taken doubtless as a good specimen of the barbarity of the times, the tribes were roused to vengeance, in the manner of a riot, by sending round as a proclamation, the pieces of a murdered woman’s body! If at any time they had a government, it was commonly the government of a usurper, who butchered, as he came into power, after the method of the Turks, all the families that had any semblance of right to civil precedence, or any possible hope of succession. The roads were destroyed, and there was no passage through the country, save in by-ways, or across the fields and mountains. The arts perished; there was not even a smith left in the land, and they were obliged to go down to the Philistines to get an axe or a mattock sharpened. In one case, they fought a battle with ox goads, because they had no better implements. Their religion being all one with the laws, fell of course into the same confusion with them. As we see in the case of Micah, Jehovah, and the gods, all stand upon a par! They have their molten images set up together in “the house of the gods,” to be smoked by the same incense; and Micah’s Levite probably has it for his duty to practise before them all! Such is the decline suffered by this emigrant nation, in the process of colonizing a new region and building up a new social fabric. But dismal as the

picture is to which they have descended, we have it for our comfort, that they are not utterly lost. After they have sounded the lowest notes of misery and social debasement, a Samuel appears, collects the scattered elements, works them gradually towards order, and the new nation, taking root, begins to rise.

Passing over now the instructive lessons that might be drawn from the Egyptian, Grecian, Carthaginian, and Roman colonies, we descend to the great American question itself. That the Mexican and the South American States have actually lost ground, since the emigration; that they have been descending steadily towards barbarism, in the loss of the old Castilian dignity, in the decay of society and manners, and the general prostration of order, is well understood. But it is commonly supposed, I believe, that our North American settlements, especially those of New England, have never suffered any similar retrogradation; that they have, on the contrary, steadily advanced or ascended to their present state. No impression could be more opposite to the real facts of history. Probably never before did any emigrant people resist, with so great promptitude and effect, the inherent causes of decline involved in a new state of society. Nor can it be said that the issue was ever doubtful. Indeed I am not sure that, if we consider the *rough amount* of character in the whole community, any real diminution was ever suffered. For if much was lost in the complete finish of the higher class, something was also gained in the sharpness, vigor, and capacity of the lower. And if there was even a decay of virtue and good manners in all classes, there was yet a gain in all, as regards spirit, self-reliance, physical endurance, and other like traits, which are essential as the staple of a perfect manhood. If there was more coarseness, so possibly there was more volume. If there was less of learning, there was also a more perfect deliverance from the restraints of learning. If they had less of society, they had as much more of action. If they finished nothing, they created more. But in taking such a view as this, which is the most favorable permitted us, it is implied, as will be observed by all, that there was, in certain very important respects, a marked decline.

This decline was most evident in the higher class, and in the cultivated manners and tastes brought over by the emigrant families. The leading spirits of the first age were truly great and cultivated men—cedars of Lebanon, nay, the topmost branches of the cedars, that God had brought over to plant by the waters of the new world. They were many of them scholars, who had received at the English universities, the highest advantages of culture furnished in that age. Their minds were matured and polished by severe study. They knew society. Some of them were persons who had travelled in foreign countries, who had figured in civil stations, and were not unskilled even as courtiers. They were

fellow disciples and compatriots with such men as Owen, Howe, Milton, John Hampden, Oliver Cromwell, and the other great spirits, who were struggling in that age for the civil and religious emancipation of their country. But they came into the wilderness, as it were to be tempted of the devil, throwing themselves and their families, for a whole century to come, upon the severest struggles of toil and warfare, to provide and fortify their new home. For a long time, they had no market. In their modes of dress, their residences, and their furniture, they were many of them restricted to supplies that were coarse and rude. Their means of education for the youth were defective, in that which is necessary to a finished and really accomplished character, though sufficient to give a good degree of rudimental force. And, more than all, society, that indefinable but powerful something which gives a tone of refinement to literary tastes, and without which feeling cannot rise to its highest dignity—this was a want, which no industry or care could supply. The trials and exposures were rough, the great world was far away, petty strifes and bickerings—always enveloped in the ill-nature of the race, but restrained among a great people under the established forms of cultivated life—broke out and raged in their little communities. A painful subsidence of manners soon began to appear. In many families, a certain flavor of refinement passed, by tradition, and in fact was never wholly spent. Still it was evident, after the first race was gone, and the second and third had come into their places, that character had fallen to a lower type. The educated men were, in comparison, a rude, or, at least, partially cultivated race. Their English style is loose. Elegance, well chastened thought, dignity of feeling, do not appear. The spelling is even more irregular and capricious than it had been. And the public proceedings of courts and churches, if the records are referred to, exhibit a certain rawness, that is quite characteristic. We feel, in short, that we have descended to an inferior race. It is somewhat as if a nest of eagles had been filled with a brood of owls.

The decline of manners and mental cultivation, consequent on a life in the woods, carried with it a correspondent decline of morals and religion. And the natural downward tendency was aggravated, by the wars in which they were compelled to engage. Thus, after the bloody war with Philip, the synod of Massachusetts, convened to deliberate on the state of virtue and religion, set forth the following mournful particulars: "a decay of godliness and secret apostasy among professors;" "pride and contention;" a "want of truth and promise breaking;" a "neglect of family prayer;" "profane swearing;" "intemperance;" "a common practice of travelling on the Sabbath day;" "inordinate passions, and breaches of the seventh commandment." Allowing all that may be necessary for exaggeration in this picture, we are still

obliged, when they speak of a *common practice* of travelling on the Sabbath day, to acknowledge that there must have been a very marked decline in their moral habits. Following too into the war the four companies, for example, of Connecticut Rangers, we find them quite at home in the woods, displaying, in their modes of warfare and their wild, rough spirit, the full grown Texan habit. On going to the church and court records of this period and onward, for the next fifty or seventy years, we discover mournful evidences of incontinence, even in the respectable families. As if, being cut off from the more refined pleasures of society, their baser passions had burnt away the restraints of delicacy, and the growing coarseness of manners had allowed them finally to seek, in these baser passions, the spring of their enjoyments. Shortly after this war, the wretched scenes of infatuation enacted at Salem, furnish us the proof that religion is dwindling towards superstition. Not that a belief in witchcraft was peculiar to New England, or to that age of the world, but only that a want of thorough mental discipline in the ministry and the courts, connected with a general taint of superstition contracted in the woods by the whole people, aggravated the public delusion and finally suffered the whole body of society to go mad, in scenes which it is even horrible to contemplate.

Still the way is downward till we come to the "great revival," so called, and the times of the French wars. And here we find a period of thirty or forty years, where the dregs of decline and the seeds of new life are so intermixed, and the signs so crossed, one by another, that we hardly know what judgment to hold. Over and above all patriotic motives that may be conceived, there was a readiness to enlist in these wars, that indicates an adventurous and partially wild habit. The little State of Connecticut, containing at that time probably about 75,000 people, raised and equipped over 5,000 men, for three years in succession. As might be expected, when these two wars were over, the people were found to be reduced to a miserable state of poverty, and, what was yet worse, it was also discovered that their habits of industry and virtuous thrift had received a fatal shock. Then it was, that the people of New England seemed for once to want a spur to their creative activity, and a society was organized "For the Promotion of Industry"—a society which brought out three hundred women with their spinning-wheels on Boston Common, to give an example to the other sex, of a virtue which they had so nearly forgotten. Meantime, the whole community, I may almost say, was unconsciously steeping itself in drink; and this also conspired, with the wars, to break down the thrift of the people. In Massachusetts alone, when she had only 150,000 people, fifteen thousand hogsheads of rum were distilled every year, and a very large share of it was consumed by her own citizens; a fact in which you will

see—what the living men of that day did not—a certain doom of decline towards social misery and brutality.

At the same time, when it even seems, in our view, that all the foundations are dissolved, and that every hope of a new American civilization has perished, there begin to rise symptoms of order, and possibly of a new era. If the masses have been unsettled, they have also been made conscious of power. Or if they have been corrupted, in the same wars which have robbed them of their virtuous habits, certain great men, afterwards to be distinguished as leaders in our history, have also had their apprenticeship—learned to be leaders, felt the elevation of power, received new impulses, prepared themselves to act with address and vigor in scenes of yet higher moment. Religion, too, has been reviving, and re-asserting its power, not of course in demonstrations the most unexceptionable or respectable, but in such as the times of the Judges will suffer. It is the wild chant of Deborah, or better still, it is the nail that was driven by Jael's hammer—not the ointment ministered by the graceful hand of Mary. This new quickening accomplished, in fact, for religion, what the French wars accomplished for liberty; it broke up the age of frost, and brought in a new era of power. We begin, therefore, shortly to discover that a new spring has been given to character. An upward motion is visible, which upward motion has continued even to the present time, save as the war of the Revolution produced a temporary decline.

Pardon me now, if I venture to fill out the view of my subject, by saying that New England society is still in the transition state. Compared with some portions of the old world, and in certain points of view, we are still in the rough—presenting to the eye a healthy living aspect, such as the old world cannot anywhere offer, but still a raw, unfinished aspect, which it remains for the next century to civilize and bring into full ornamental perfection. For as our history now begins to live on its own root, and to send up a vitalizing power into the social body; as wealth is unfolded; as schools and colleges are perfecting their standards of learning; as literature and art advance to maturity, we are rising steadily into noon, as a people socially complete.

But the great problem of American society is not solved, however much it may be illustrated, by the history of New England. Still we are rolling on from east to west, plunging into the wilderness, scouring across the great inland deserts and mountains, to plant our habitations on the western ocean. Here again the natural tendencies of emigration towards barbarism, or social decline, are displayed, in signs that cannot be mistaken. The struggle through which we have passed, is continually repeating itself, under new modifications. We see the same experiment involving similar jeopardies; and we may draw out of our own experience

warnings to make us anxious, and encouragements to make us hopeful for our country—a double argument of fear and hope, to make us doubly faithful in our Christian efforts for its welfare.

In some respects, this westward emigration is secured by advantages which our own colonial emigration had not; in others, it is beset by disadvantages quite as decided. Among the advantages are these—First, a better and more available market for the sale of its products, and hence, a much greater facility in rising to a state of outward comfort. Secondly, a good and well established government, able to protect the beginnings made, exerting also an important moral constraint over all tendencies to lawlessness and public disorder. Thirdly, a connexion with the eastern and older portions of the country, by which they are made to feel the moral effect of association with a more advanced state of manners, of social culture and religious virtue. Fourthly, a history; for it is not as when our fathers forsook a history to plant themselves in this new world; but the emigrant, wherever he strays, remembers that he is an American still. He looks out from his hut of logs on the western border, and feels the warmth of a distinct nationality glowing round him, like the clear warm light of day itself. On the other hand, these manifest advantages are counterbalanced by disadvantages. First, the western emigration is not religious, but is instigated by mere personal interest and adventure. Secondly, it does not carry with it a homogeneous or a well educated people. Together with a portion of enterprising, well qualified young men, who are rushing westward after their fortune, it gathers in the rude-minded and ignorant masses of western Pennsylvania; the luckless and impoverished families flying from slavery in Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee; together with such hordes of foreigners, as the over-populated countries of Europe are obliged to spare—men of all habits, characters, and religions—and these it pours along in a promiscuous flood, to people the new world, and settle into social order as best they may. Then, thirdly, a considerable portion of the new west has a social and historical connexion with slavery, which is continually doubling the inherent perils of emigration itself.

And here, since this institution of slavery, entering into the fortunes of our history, complicates, in so many ways, the disorders we suffer, I must pause a few moments to sketch its characteristics. Slavery, it is not to be denied, is an essentially barbarous institution. It gives us too that sign, which is the perpetual distinction of barbarism, that it has no law of progress. The highest level it reaches, is the level at which it begins. Indeed, we need not scruple to allow that it has yielded us one considerable advantage, in virtue of the fact, that it produces its best condition first. For while the northern people were generally delving in labor, for many generations, to create a condition of

comfort, slavery set the masters at once on a footing of ease, gave them leisure for elegant intercourse, for unprofessional studies, and seasoned their character thus with that kind of cultivation which distinguishes men of society. A class of statesmen were thus raised up, who were prepared to figure as leaders in scenes of public life, where so much depends on manners and social address. But now the scale is changing. Free labor is rising, at length, into a state of wealth and comfort, to take the lead of American society. Meanwhile, the foster sons of slavery—the high families, the statesmen—gradually receding in character, as they must under this vicious institution, are receding also in power and influence, and have been ever since the revolution. Slavery is a condition against nature; the curse of nature therefore is on it, and it bows to its doom, by a law as irresistible as gravity. It produces a condition of ease which is not the reward of labor, and a state of degradation which is not the curse of idleness. Therefore the ease it enjoys cannot but end in a curse, and the degradation it suffers cannot rise into a blessing. It nourishes imperious and violent passions. It makes the masters solitary sheiks on their estates, forbidding thus the possibility of public schools, and preventing also that condensed form of society, which is necessary to the vigorous maintenance of churches. Education and religion thus displaced, the dinner table only remains, and on this hangs, in great part, the keeping of the social state. But however highly we may estimate the humanizing power of hospitality, it cannot be regarded as any sufficient spring of character. It is neither a school, nor a gospel. And when it comes of self-indulgence, or only seeks relief for the tedium of an idle life, scarcely does it bring with it the blessings of a virtue. The accomplishments it yields are of a mock quality, rather than of a real, having about the same relation to a substantial and finished culture, that honor has to character. This kind of currency will pass no longer, for it is not expense without comfort, or splendor set in disorder, as diamonds in pewter; it is not airs in place of elegance, or assurance substituted for ease; neither is it to be master of a fluent speech, or to garnish the same with stale quotations from the classics; much less is it to live in the Don Juan vein, accepting barbarism by poetic inspiration—the same which a late noble poet, drawing out of Turks and pirates, became the chosen laureate of slavery—not any or all of these can make up such a style of man, or of life, as we in this age demand. We have come up now to a point, where we look for true intellectual refinement, and a ripe state of personal culture. But how clearly is it seen to be a violation of its own laws, for slavery to produce a genuine scholar, or a man, who, in any department of excellence, unless it be in politics, is not a full century behind his time. And if we ask for what is dearer and better still, for a pure Christian morality, the youth of slavery are trained in no such

habits, as are most congenial to virtue. The point of honor is the only principle many of them know. Violence and dissipation bring down every succeeding generation to a state continually lower; so that now, after a hundred and fifty years are passed, the slave-holding territory may be described as a vast missionary ground, and one so uncomfortable to the faithful ministry of Christ, by reason of its jealous tempers, and the known repugnance it has to many of the first maxims of the gospel, that scarcely a missionary can be found to enter it. Connected with this moral decay, the resources of nature also are exhausted, and her fertile territories changed to a desert, by the uncreating power of a spendthrift institution. And then, having made a waste where God had made a garden, slavery gathers up the relics of bankruptcy, and the baser relics still of virtue and all-manly enterprise, and goes forth to renew, on a virgin soil, its dismal and forlorn history. Thus, at length, has been produced what may be called the bowie-knife style of civilization, and the new West of the South is overrun by it—a spirit of blood which defies all laws of God and man; honorable but not honest; prompt to resent an injury, slack to discharge a debt; educated to ease, and readier, of course, when the means of living fail, to find them at the gambling-table or the race-ground, than in any work of industry—probably squandering the means of living there, to relieve the tedium of ease itself.

Such is the influence of slavery, as it enters into our American social state, and imparts its moral type of barbarism, through emigration, to the new west. Hence, the Mexican war, which has its beginning and birth in what I have called the bowie-knife style of civilization—a war in the nineteenth century, which, if it was not purposely begun, many are visibly determined shall be, a war for the extension of slavery. It was no one political party, as some pretend, who made this war, but it was the whole south-west and west rather of all parties, instigated by a wild and riotous spirit of adventure, which no terms of reason or of Christian prudence and humanity could check. And if this war results, as probably it may, in the acquisition of a vast western territory, then is our great pasture ground of barbarism so much to be enlarged, the room to run wild extended, the chances of final anarchy and confusion multiplied.

We are now prepared to complete our view, by passing directly to the subject of western emigration itself. And what are the moral and social results here preparing? That I can draw a picture of western society, which will be universally approved, is more than I have any right to expect. I can only give such a sketch as the facts seem to require, and without exaggeration; observing, however, that if any western man should be dissatisfied, it will by no means convince me that I am wrong; for to conceive a people rightly it is not sufficient to know them; they must

be viewed from a stand point without. And just as the character of New England cannot be rightly drawn, save as it is viewed from abroad, so no western or westernized man, coming directly out from the scenes of western life, is qualified, on that account, to estimate their social standing and prospects. On the contrary, he may even be partially disqualified, by the experience under which he has fallen. At the same time, let it be understood, that in what I may say, however the public may receive it, I do not consider myself as reflecting any necessary dishonor on the west, or on western society. It is no dishonor in them, any more than it was to New England, to suffer what they must, from the very laws of society itself. On the contrary, if the west puts forth a manly struggle to breast the laws of decline involved in a new social state, it may even display the more heroic qualities, because of the adverse elements it has the spirit to master. Much the same allowances, too, are to be made here, that were supposed to hold in reference to the decline of New England. It is not general or universal. It includes only a portion of western society, and this portion only in regard to certain particulars. Probably there is no decline, but an improvement rather, if we take in all, and regard what I have called the total amount of character. Many of the emigrants from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and yet further south, were at a very low point of character when they removed, and these, brought within the reach even partially of schools and churches, are rapidly improving. If the emigrants from New England lose ground, in manners, piety, and habits of intelligence, they also gain in spirit, freedom, self-reliance, and other qualities that are certainly desirable. Besides, we are making strenuous efforts to save the west from the decline that would otherwise appear; so that while there is a certain tendency to barbarism in their new condition of society, that tendency, we may believe, is held in check, and in many cases displaced, even from the beginning, by signs of improvement.

Western character has many powerful and promising qualities, but it wants the salt of religious virtue, the sobriety of discipline, and the modesty of true intelligence. It is frank, bold, earnest, and positive, but somewhat rude and extravagant, and specially destitute of the genial sentiments which enrich the more settled and cultivated forms of society. A very large portion of the western community, it is well known, are already so far gone in ignorance, as to make a pride of it, and even to decry education as an over-genteel accomplishment. They hold, of course, their manhood in their will, not in their understanding; which is the same as to say that law is weak, and passion violent. Hence, the many public murders, committed in the newer states of the west and south, which are never legally investigated. Or, perhaps you will even see an ambitious young city, mustering itself in a military mob, to

murder an inoffensive Christian minister and citizen; and when it is done, when the fit of passion is over, the law, instead of rising up to re-assert its rights, as we see it do in older and less barbarous communities, still sleeping in its violated majesty. Or, if you will discover how near it is possible to come, and within how short a time, to a complete dissolution of civil order, you may see the executive power of a sovereign state standing by, for six months, to look on, as a spectator, while two organized military parties of its own citizens are prosecuting an open war, one to defend, the other to capture an American city! Where shall such disorders stop? and what is the limit towards which they run? If, in the days of the Judges, Pennsylvania rebelled against the excise of whiskey, and now Illinois substitutes the camp and the siege, in place of justice itself and the ordinary methods of legal redress, what shall by and by appear, in some new state as far west of Illinois, as that is of Pennsylvania? What are we to expect as this reign of passion, spreading onward across the vast regions yet unoccupied, grows yet more violent as it is deeper in ignorance, and wilder still, as it is more remote from the haunts of Christian civilization? Is it not well understood that a partially wild race of men, such as cannot any longer be properly included in the terms of civilization, is already formed? I speak of what is sometimes called the pioneer race. They roll on, like a prairie fire, before the advance of regular emigration; they have no fixed habits, and do not care to appropriate the soil, consequently have no education or religion. They live mainly by hunting and pasture; and, when a regular settlement begins within an hour's ride, they feel the proximity too close, quit their hut of logs, which is in fact only their tent, and start on, by another long remove, into the wild regions beyond them. These semi-barbarians, too, are continually multiplying in numbers, and becoming more distinct in their habits. Ere long, there is reason to fear they will be scouring in populous bands over the vast territories of Oregon and California, to be known as the pasturing tribes—the wild hunters and robber clans of the western hemisphere—American Moabites, Arabs, and Edomites!

Or if it seem extravagant to speak of any such result, let it not be forgotten that one emigrant family of the Saxon race has already sunk into barbarism, since our history began. I speak of the Dutch Boers in South Africa. They are Calvinistic Protestants; they began their settlement at Cape Town in the year 1651. And now they are virtually barbarians; for they are scarcely less wild in their habits than the Hottentots themselves. They subsist by pasture, roving from place to place. Lynch law and private revenge are the principal methods of redressing injuries. Their habits are filthy. Their women do the work. Education is forgotten, and the cruelties they practise in their sanguinary wars, are such as assimilate them to beasts of prey. They

are now a race of nominally Christian barbarians—barbarians under the synod of Dort, a standing proof that Protestants, and they too of the Saxon blood, may drop out of civilization, and take their place on the same level of ignorance and social brutality with the barbarous tribes of the earth. Let no American that loves his country refuse to heed the example.

Many are accustomed to regard the exposure of our western country to Romanism with extreme horror, regarding a possible lapse into this corrupt form of religion as the climax of all possible disasters. In that opinion there is quite as little to approve, as there is in the over-confident opinion of those who declare that Romanism cannot spread in this country. Nothing is necessary to make room for Romanism, but to empty us of all opposing qualities; and it will not take a long period of ignorance and religious anarchy to do that. Nor do I mean to imply, in thus speaking, that Romanism can co-exist only with barbarism, much less to sharpen a point of satire against the Romish church. Under this we know are gathered many great and accomplished men, and many nations further advanced, in some respects, than we. I only mean, that while it is possible for a people brought up in Romanism to become socially advanced under it, a free-minded people, brought up in mental and moral habits wholly opposite, never can be led into it, save through the gate of superstition; which gate of superstition never can be opened, save by a loss of knowledge, social order, and religion, such as approximates to barbarism. There may be cases where a cultivated man, wearied out and lost in the mazes of fantastic speculation, throws up suddenly the prerogatives of reason, and takes it for certain that God will do him good, if he has a Levite to his priest. There may be truly godly men—men, so to speak, of an overgrown religious sentiment, who see no consistent issue short of Romanism to assumptions already made, and whose nerves are too weak to go back and manfully sift these assumptions—there may be such, who fall a prey to their own delicate illusions, and drop into the Romish church to settle their peace. But these are only caprices, accidents, idiosyncrasies, which support no general conclusion, save that between opposite superlatives, the sublimities and follies of mankind, there is often a natural brotherhood. Thus, over-cultivation may sometimes join hands at the church door with barbarism, both entering as fellow proselytes together. Thus over-speculation will sometimes throw by private judgment in disgust, and place itself on a par, with those who have no private judgment to lose. But the great danger of Romanism, the only danger of any moment, is from the multiplication of the latter class—those who have no private judgment to lose; and it is a real danger. Man is a religious being, and if he cannot come to God through his intelligence, he will come to what sort of God his superstitions offer him. When, therefore, I consider how certainly an ignorant

soul is prepared to superstition, remembering also the vast amount of ignorance that prevails among the western people, I want no other proof that superstition has already a wide and terrible sway over the western mind. Or if I suffer a doubt, the great Mormon city and temple rise as proof visible before me—proof, however, that does not accrue as against the west alone, save that it shows how all fantastic errors and absurdities will assuredly congregate there. Who could have thought it possible that a wretched and silly delusion, like that of the Mormons, could gather in its thousands of disciples in this enlightened age, build a populous city, and erect a temple rivalling in grandeur even that of the false prophet at Mecca? And when we see, in facts like these, how readily material may be gathered to represent the times of the Judges, it is vain to imagine that Romanism can find no affinities prepared among us, or that none can be found, who will think it a religion to have a Levite to their priest. Romanism can do anything in this country which we will help it to do, and we ought not to complain if it does no more. Or if we persist in training a barbarous people for its use, let us indulge no regrets that Romanism gives them such a religion as they are capable of receiving.

I have led you thus over a wide field, and yet the subject is not exhausted. But I can pursue the argument no further. If now you ask what is to be the conclusion of the great problem we have on hand; shall we go clear, at last, of all these perils; shall we rise into order, law, intelligence, and religion; or will parts of the nation go down, at last, below the capacity to rise? I care not to answer that question. Indeed it is a question to be answered, not in speeches or conjectures, but by our works! The answer hangs, not on what we may think or reason, but on what we shall do! We can make it what we desire; we can make it as bad as we have power even to fear! Enough that we understand the magnificence of the problem, and the tremendous perils incident thereto, viz. that we have it on hand to struggle up, for half a century or a century to come, against the downward currents of decline, and bear up the nation with us, into a settled condition of Christian culture and virtue; which if we do, the critical point of our destiny is turned. We are then to be the most august and happiest nation that has ever appeared on earth, the leading power of the world's history. Was there ever a struggle offered to the good and great of mankind, so fit to kindle enthusiasm, or nerve the soul to patient sacrifices!

WHAT, THEN, SHALL WE DO?

First of all, we must not despair. There is no cause for despair. Dark as the picture is that I have given, I do not, for one, suffer

a misgiving thought. In many portions of the field, the crisis is already past. In others it soon will be. And every new state or section added to the parts already secure, brings an accession of aid and a more preponderant weight of influence. Of the new regions, we may say that Vermont, Western New York, and a part of Ohio, are already gained, and are now side by side with us, helping us to support the downward pressure of the emigrant masses. We have only to make sure, in like manner, of all the States this side of the Mississippi, and then the critical point is, in my estimation, passed. Much will remain to be done; but the result will be sure. For when once the vast region this side of the Mississippi is seen to be ascending with us into order and Christian refinement, the regions beyond will scarcely be able to drag themselves down into anarchy. The die of our destiny is cast. Seeing then the momentous perils that hang about us, let them only quicken us to a more fixed and heroic devotion. It must be a faint heart that cannot bear up, in a struggle so evidently temporary. Nothing is more certain than that, if we deserve to triumph, we shall triumph; and if that be not enough to sustain our courage, we are worthy of no such cause as this.

And what next? We must get rid, if possible, I answer, of slavery. It aggravates every bad tendency we suffer. We cannot, as American Christians, be at peace with it longer. Not forgetting the moderation that belongs to every just cause, we must lift our voices against it, and must not desist from all proper means to secure its removal, till the work is done.

We must also return, as soon as possible, to a condition of peace, and maintain it, as the only hope of moral and social progress in our country. War is the proper work only of barbarians—the bane, therefore, of all social order and virtue. Even New England itself, as I have shown you, came near sinking into a fatal debauchery of character in the wars she encountered. For a war exasperates all the evils incident to emigration, postpones all settled habits, and turns all sobriety to madness.

If something could be done to civilize the manner of American politics, to abate the rudeness of political animosities, to establish candor and courtesy and dignity of feeling between opposing parties and their leaders, it would greatly expedite the progress of refinement in our people. And I know of no more ready or proper expedient, than for every Christian man to look at the most interior merits of every cause or question, and stand ready to support the right, bear what name it may.

Be it also understood, that the sooner we have rail-roads and telegraphs spinning into the wilderness, and setting the remotest hamlets in connexion and close proximity with the East, the more certain it is that light, good manners, and Christian refinement, will become universally diffused. For when the emigrant settlements

of Minesota or of Oregon feel that they are just in the suburb of Boston, it is nearly the same thing, in fact, as if they actually were.

Education, too, is another and yet more sacred interest which we are to favor and promote by every reasonable means. Colleges are a great and pressing want; but we want only a few. Indeed, we have enough already for the next twenty years, if only they were fully organized and sufficiently endowed. Subordinate schools, and especially rudimental schools, are a much more pressing want; but these, in order to have any value, must be created and supported principally by the people for whose benefit they exist. The most, therefore, which can be done is to stimulate the demand for such schools, in every convenient manner.

This brings me to speak, last of all, of that which is really the chief, the all-important work, viz. to provide a talented and educated body of Christian teachers, and keep them pressing into the wilderness, as far as emigration itself can go. These mixing with the families, and entering into their new struggles, will stimulate the demand for instruction, assist in the founding of schools and academies, and become the guardians of every good interest. We must throw ourselves out, therefore, upon HOME MISSIONS as the first and sublimest Christian duty which the age lays upon us.

Religion is the only prop on which we can lean with any confidence; and Home Missions are the vehicle of religion. In no form of human society is there any law of self-support and self-conservation. There is no shape of society, least of all any shape of new society, that will not rot itself down and dissolve, unless there descend upon it from above, a conserving power which it has not in itself. Nothing but religion, a ligature binding society to God, can save it. No light, save that which is celestial, no virtue but that which is born of God, no power of motivity, but that which is drawn from other worlds, can suffice to preserve, compact, and edify a new social state. It was religion that sustained and finally turned the crisis of New England. It was religion, dispensed by the old Missionary Society of Connecticut, and other sister institutions of a later date, which finally turned the crisis of Vermont, Western New York, and Eastern Ohio. Among these later institutions, and as the most vigorous and powerful too of all, we are to class the Home Missionary Society, for which I now speak—a Society which is now hovering over Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and other new regions beyond, as once it did over the regions just named. It has now a spiritual army six hundred strong, in these fields, and waits to make its hundreds, thousands. For it has undertaken the most magnificent work ever yet appropriated to any human institution, with a zeal proportioned to its grandeur. In this institution, for I speak this evening only to its friends, we are en-

listed, as I trust, with whatever of Christian determination God permits us to exercise. Here we feel that we have the future in our charge, and we mean to see the trust faithfully fulfilled. To save this mighty nation; to make it the leading power of the earth; to present to mankind the spectacle of a nation stretching from ocean to ocean, across this broad continent; a nation of free men, self-governed, governed by simple law, without soldiers or a police; a nation of a hundred millions of people, covering the sea with their fleets, the land with cities, roads, and harvests; first in learning and art, and all the fruits of genius, and, what is highest and best of all, a religious nation, blooming in all the Christian virtues; the protector of the poor; the scourge of oppression; the dispenser of light, and the symbol to mankind, of the ennobling genial power of righteous laws, and a simple Christian faith—this is the charge God lays upon us, this we accept and this, by God's blessing, we mean to perform, with a spirit worthy its magnitude. I say not that we must forsake other and more distant fields of duty. God will never call us to that. I only say that there can be no other duty at all comparable to the duty of saving our country; none that God so manifestly imposes. What less than a romantic folly could it seem, to any sober mind, if such indeed were the alternative, to be pouring out our mercies into the obscure outposts of heathenism, and leaving this great nation, this brightest hope of the ages, to go down as a frustrated and broken experiment!

It is time also to understand, that if we are to fill this great field with Christian churches and a Christian people, we must have a spirit of life in our breasts, and a tone of Christian devotion such as we have not hitherto exhibited. Here is the only real cause of discouragement I know. It is not money, it is not men, it is no mere human outlay that can bear up such a work as this. We want the unworldly spirit; that which knits us, and through us knits our great country to God. And then, also, we want that intense and Christ-like humanity, which will attract the feeling of our whole country towards us. For it is not in oppositions, it is not in raising a crusade against Romanism, or filling the air with outcries of any sort, that we are to save our country. We must rise upon it as the morning, in the tranquillity of love. We must rain righteousness upon it, as a genial shower.

It is beautiful also to see that God designs, by the very work we undertake, to fill out and furnish our own Christian type of character and society. In the case of our own fathers, it seems probable that nothing but the strong pillars of high Calvinism held them up, or could have held them up, till the critical point of their history was passed. There were no missionaries coming over unto them. Nothing could hold them up but an internal force, such as they had in these doctrines—doctrines that were incorporated in their souls, as the spinal column in their bodies. Thus, when

their manners were grown wild, their sentiments coarse, and their ill-trained understandings generally incapable of nice speculation, still the tough questions of their theology kept them always in action; still they could grasp hold of the great iron pillars of election, reprobation, and decrees, and their clumsy-handed thoughts were able to feel them distinctly. Whoever could distinguish a thunderbolt could surely think of these, and it mattered not so much whether they thought exactly right, as that they kept thinking, and in their thinking brought down God upon their souls. So they took hold of the iron pillars that held up the theologic heavens, and climbed and heaved in huge surges of might, and kept their gross faculties in exercise, till the critical hour of their trial was passed. The themes they handled kept them too before God. They dwelt in the summits of divine government. They looked upon the throne, they heard the thunders roll below, and felt the empyrean shake above, at the going forth of God's decrees. Such a religion as they had could not be distant or feeble. It had power to invest the coarse mind with a divine presence, and make Jehovah felt as an element of experience. Never was there a better foundation for a grand, massive character in religion; and now God means to finish out this character, by uniting in it the softer shades of feeling, and the broader compass of a more catholic and genial spirit. We go forth now to a people, who unite all manner of opinions, and we go in company with Christians of other names and other creeds, who are undertakers also in the same great work. We cannot, therefore, spend our strength now upon exclusive and distinctive dogmas, but we must proceed in a catholic and comprehensive spirit. Otherwise we shall be at war with each other, and shall only spend our force in demolishing all the force we have. Thus, the Methodists, for example, have a ministry admirably adapted, as regards their mode of action, to the new west—a kind of light artillery that God has organized to pursue and overtake the fugitives that flee into the wilderness from his presence. They are prompt and efficient in action, ready for all service, and omnipresent, as it were, in the field. The new settler reaches the ground to be occupied, and, by the next week, he is likely to find the circuit crossing by his door, and to hear the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you!" Our Methodist brethren have put on their armor, too, against the enemies of learning among themselves. They are building colleges, and one among the number, which they mean to make the most complete and best endowed university in the west. If sometimes their demonstrations are rude, and their spirit of rivalry violent, still it is good to have such rivals, for their labor is still ours, and when they have reached the state of intelligence they are after, they are sure to become effectually, if not formally, one with us. Therefore let there be, if possible,

no controversy with them ; but let us rather encourage ourselves in a work so vast, by the fact that we have so vast an army of helpers in the field with us. So of all the other Christian families, who are going into the field to do a work for their Master. There should be not only concord of spirit, but also an actual understanding ; so that we may cover together as much ground as possible. And then we should all go forth together, to calm the angry divisions of controversy and sweeten the bitter prejudices of sectarian strife. Earnest for the truth, we must also remember that truth itself is catholic and comprehensive. We must shun that vapid liberalism, which, instead of attracting us into unity, will only dissolve us into indifference, and yet we must be willing to stretch our forbearance and charity even to Romanists themselves, when we clearly find the spirit of Jesus in their life. In this manner, God will instruct us by our work, and make our work itself our reward. Engaging with our utmost ardor to save the wilder portions of our country, we shall carry on thus our own noble beginnings to completion, and finish out a character, as earnest in its sacrifices and catholic in its charities, as it is firm in its original elements. May we not also hope to draw down from the skies, upon us and upon all the regions for which we labor, such a baptism of love as will melt both us and them, and all the families of Christ in our land, into one Christian fraternity !

Then will we go on and give it to our sons and daughters to come after us. We will measure our strength by the grandeur of our object. The wilderness shall bud and blossom as the rose before us ; and we will not cease, till a Christian nation throws up its temples of worship on every hill and plain ; till knowledge, virtue, and religion, blending their dignity and their healthful power, have filled our great country with a manly and a happy race of people, and the bands of a complete Christian commonwealth are seen to span the continent.

And now, Jehovah God, thou who by long ages of watch and discipline, didst make of thy servant Abraham a people, be thou the God also of this great nation. Remember still its holy beginnings, and for the fathers' sakes, still cherish and sanctify it. Fill it with thy Light, and thy Potent Influence ; till the glory of thy Son breaks out on the western sea, as now upon the eastern, and these uttermost parts, given to Christ for a possession, become the bounds of a new Christian Empire, whose name the believing and the good of all people shall hail as a name of hope and blessing !

BEAUTY OF FORGIVENESS.

"How beautiful falls
From human lips that blessed word, FORGIVE."

If there is anything which has power to bind the heart of man with a firm, enduring affection, it is forgiveness, called forth by meek, sincere, unconditional repentance. Every one of us, however short our lives and slight our experience, can perhaps remember when, having done injustice to some one near and dear, pardon has been implored and forgiveness readily and affectionately granted—can remember, I say, the magic with which it swept away any lingering trace of alienated feeling, and bound with renewed strength every sentiment of regard and esteem. The faculty of forgiving and receiving forgiveness is one of the finest in human nature. It is the main point in every noble, every refined and elevated character. Dark, sinister, and intriguing men can never forgive, and the consciousness of being forgiven is sufficient to arouse their darkest passions.

If a man wishes to live a peaceful, rational life, he must call forgiveness often into action; and he will find it has the magic of a charm to allay all bitterness, reconcile all differences, dispel all those petty quarrels which so often embitter the intercourse of even good men. It is the glorious element in God's government over man, as well as an essential, life-giving principle of the plan of redemption. It is the leading feature of Holy Writ, and finds an ardent, sincere response in the bosom of every high-minded man. It is the strongest link in the chain that binds the heart of every Christian to his Lord and Master. It is the consciousness of being forgiven, that awakens all the nobler emotions of his soul, and rouses his dormant energies to active service in the cause of his Redeemer.

Forgiveness from God or man, lays an individual under obligations that, to a sensitive, delicate mind, are anything but unpleasant or humiliating. A certain degree of pride of character is far from being reprehensible—it gives force and dignity; but the pride that cannot ask forgiveness, is obstinacy, is stubbornness; and the mind that it will not melt and subdue, must be dead to all that is noble, destitute of all that assimilates to divinity, and fiendish enough for pandemonium itself. Could the world at large be induced to enter upon the practice of forgiveness, its use would soon be obviated, and the millennium dawn upon us in all its splendor and glory.

Let us then remember, that as in the ocean the greatest commotion is produced by the action of small particles one upon another, so we, although insignificant members of an extensive community, are constantly coming in contact one with another, and transmitting our thoughts, feelings, and opinions. And however our feelings may be injured, our characters assailed, our tempers vexed and tried, let us remember, it is God-like to forgive.—FLETCHER.